

Copy of the Draught of a Letter (by Rev. A. P. Peabody)
intended as a Reply to the Irish Address.

Christian Brethren;

We regret y^t. your fraternal greetings forwarded to us through Rev. Dr. Gannett [in 1843] should have remained so long unanswered. It was an undesigned omission on our part, not to be imputed to the cause to which we are sorry to find that you ascribe it, but to the fact that we have no organization for the purpose of correspondence, that the general meetings of the Clergy of our body are few, brief, and almost informal, and that there was no individual or committee, to whom properly belonged the responsibility of considering & answering a document like the one referred to.

In responding to your recent Address, we take pleasure in congratulating you on the successful issue of your long & arduous struggle in behalf of religious liberty, in the passage of the Dissenters' Chapels' Bill; and we earnestly hope that our brethren in Great Britain will intermit no mode of lawful and Christian effort for the removal of all remaining restrictions on the entire freedom of religious profession & worship.

On the subject of Slavery, we cannot but apprehend that our position, efforts, & influence

are greatly misunderstood by our trans-Atlantic ^{friends.} ~~brethren~~.
You have undoubtedly derived your impressions on this
subject, for the most part, from the publications issued
& sustained by the great Antislavery organizations in this
country. With these organizations some of us sympathize
very cordially, while many others of our number, on grounds
to themselves satisfactory, have kept aloof from them,
and have thus incurred the charge of indifference or
hostility to the cause which they espouse. But we speak
advisedly, when we say that there are very few of our
body, who have not deeply felt, and publicly recognized
in various ways, their responsibility as to the great
national sin, under which our land groans. In this
remark we are happy to include some of our brethren,
who have been approved ministers of our faith in the
slaveholding states, - men, whose blended prudence &
courage have excited our sincerest admiration, and
who, without resorting to those public manifestations
& movements, which would have been deemed insur-
rectionary, have done much towards diffusing the
principles of freedom on the very soil of slavery.

You are not perhaps aware how much
good work, in antagonism to slavery, has been effected
in the non-slaveholding States, and how little power
the citizens of those States can exert beyond their own
borders. Massachusetts & New Hampshire, the

States in which the Societies of our faith are the most numerous, already occupy as decidedly an anti-slavery attitude as they can without separating themselves from the Federal Union. In both these States, it is a penal offence for a citizen to render aid in the arresting of a fugitive slave; and though, by the laws of the U.S., a Slaveholder may pursue & arrest the man whom he claims as his property wherever he finds him, it is morally impossible that this should be effected except through the local magistrates, and by the use of the County jails. Both these States also maintain the attitude of determined protest against the continuance of slavery in the District of Columbia, and the enlargement of the area of Slavery. These results have been brought about chiefly through the ~~influence~~ agency of legislators connected with our religious body, and a large part in them has been borne by the preaching & the private influence of the clergymen of that body.

So far as we are divided in opinion on this momentous subject, it is not as to our duty to those in bondage, but as to the best mode of discharging it. It is a division similar to that which might be traced as to causes & enterprises, in which none of us are suspected of lukewarmness or indifference. While the great moral ends set before us are the same, the varying circumstances

of our congregations & communities prescribe a wide diversity of means & measures, and render it grossly unjust to judge us by the unvarying standard, which might be laid down even by the purest philanthropists, whose peculiar field of action was [is] not fenced in by parochial limits.

We say not these things in the tone or spirit of apology or self-justification, but because we wish our Chm. brethren in Ireland to know our hearts, as we wd. gladly know theirs. At the same time, in this, as in every other worthy cause, we cannot but be painfully conscious of many deficiencies & shortcomings, and solicit your prayers with ours, that, on both sides the Atlantic, those, who think that they have attained a purer faith than their brethren, may manifest its blessed influences & direct its holy energies for the putting away of every form of wrong & sin, and the bringing in of everlasting righteousness.

We remain, Brethren, Your affectionate
Friends -

{ Draft of which above
is copy - received by me Oct. 3. 1826. }

Content.

A. P. Pauldy,
F. D. Huntington
G. F. Simmons (with 5 or 6 amendments.)
F. H. Hedge.

Non-Content.

J. G. Clarke.
J. A. Andrews.
S. May.

S. Osgood
G. W. Briggs
J. P. McKim

J. W. Holman.

Ms. B. 1.6. v. 3, p. 19